

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) announced today that Iraq, Afghanistan, and other recent veterans can begin the application process to receive education benefits from the new GI Bill.

Last year, Congress passed the *Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008*, H.R. 5470, providing a four-year college education for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, or any veteran who has served since 9/11. Veterans can apply for a certificate of eligibility beginning May 1, 2009 to receive benefits starting on August 1, 2009.

Generally, the measure provides up to four years of higher education benefits at institutions such as community colleges, vocational schools, or universities for individuals with at least 90 days of active duty service on or after September 11, 2001 and who have been honorably discharged from service. Benefits are based on the number of years served, and to receive full benefits a veteran must have served on active duty for three years. These benefits are generally payable for up to 15 years following release from active duty.

The program provides:

- Tuition and fees of up to the maximum in-state tuition and fees at a public institution in Illinois;
- A monthly housing allowance at the location of the school; and
- An annual books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000.

To apply, veterans can visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs website, <https://www.gibill.va.gov/>.